

## **GUIDANCE FOR DEBRIS OPERATIONS**

This memorandum is intended to offer general guidance for management of debris on public property. Debris on private property is generally the responsibility of the property owner. Debris management operations under FEMA's Public Assistance (PA) program generally occur in two phases: emergency clearance (under Category B, Emergency Protective Measures) and debris removal (under Category A, Debris Removal). Whether cities and towns will receive federal reimbursement for emergency clearance and/or debris removal depends on whether the Commonwealth receives a Major Disaster Declaration, and whether Category A and/or Category B assistance is authorized under the Major Disaster Declaration. If approved, a Major Disaster Declaration that includes Category A and/or Category B assistance may authorize up to 75% federal reimbursement.

This memorandum is not intended to be an exhaustive list of all the requirements associated with debris removal and monitoring issues, but rather an introduction to the process, program requirements and to provide links to more detailed information regarding policies, procurement and additional guidance.

**PHASE 1: EMERGENCY CLEARANCE (CATEGORY B)** – Initial clearance activities necessary to eliminate immediate threats to life, public health and safety. Activities must meet the definition of emergency work:

- The debris must be located within the declared disaster area;
- The debris must be located on improved property or right of ways; and
- The improved property or right of ways must be the legal responsibility of the applicant at the time of the event.

Essentially, Phase 1, Emergency Clearance, is limited to the initial opening of roadways to allow access for emergency vehicles. The transition period from initial emergency clearance to the debris removal phase begins after the emergency access routes are cleared and police, firefighters, and other first responders have the necessary access to public property. Guidance for the emergency clearance phase:

- Cut and push to clear debris from roadways to restore emergency access/egress
- Emergency protective measures only – push to side of road and move on to next emergency site
- Contract pricing may use time and materials method (not volume) for first 70 hours of work, a ceiling cost or not to exceed provision must be included in the contract
- Carefully monitor and document contractor expenses
- Document all locations, labor, equipment, type, etc

Under the FEMA Public Assistance Program, FEMA will typically only reimburse applicants for a time and materials contract for eligible debris clearance during the first 70 hours of work (hours are for the particular work task, not the amount of time since the storm began or a declaration was made) following a declared disaster. After 70 hours of actual time and material work, the applicant

should have sufficient information on the scope of work necessary to complete debris collection and disposal, and a basis for estimating a reasonable cost for the contract work to effectively solicit a lump sum or unit price contract.

**PHASE 2: DEBRIS REMOVAL OPERATIONS (CATEGORY A)** – After emergency clearance work is complete (meaning debris has been cut and pushed to the side to allow emergency access), Debris Removal entails moving debris, reducing debris and/or disposing of debris. These operations require applicants to follow procurement requirements, monitor contract debris operations, quantify debris and have a final approved destination for debris.

- The transition from initial emergency clearance to debris removal phase begins after access routes to public property are cleared to allow for emergency vehicles
- Reduction and removal of debris pushed or left in place
- Must be independently monitored for volume, type, hours, and equipment
- An approved debris management disposal site must be used
- If removing debris prior to an assessment by MEMA and FEMA, utilize a central, segregated location for all storm debris
- For final removal, debris should be diverted from disposal to recycling, composting, or other beneficial use

### **DEBRIS FROM PRIVATE PROPERTY**

Communities that choose to offer curbside pick-up of debris from private property must follow all applicable FEMA rules and can only be reimbursed to the extent that the private property debris posed an imminent threat to public safety or access/egress to the property. Generally, FEMA assistance is not available to reimburse private property owners for the cost of removing debris from their property. Property owners should be encouraged to consult their insurance carriers.

### **STATE DEBRIS CONTRACTS**

State contracts are available for debris management and monitoring. These contracts may be used for Phase 1 and/or Phase 2 work.

### **DEBRIS MONITORING**

Debris monitoring procedures should be established and included in the debris management plan for the community to protect the community's financial interests, especially if the applicant has contracted for any component of the debris removal operation. Communities can use force account resources or contractors to monitor debris removal operations, or a combination of both. Regardless of the method, the community is responsible for ensuring that debris removal work is community-managed.

Monitoring debris removal operations requires comprehensive observation and documentation by the community from the point of debris collection to final disposal.

Monitoring debris removal operations achieves two (2) objectives: verifying that the work completed by the contractor is within the contract scope of work; and providing the required documentation for Public Assistance (PA) Grant reimbursement.

Debris monitors are responsible for:

- Recording quantities of debris accurately on load tickets. A load ticket system is used to record with specificity (i.e., street address, GPS coordinates) where debris is collected and the amount picked up, hauled, reduced and disposed of;
- Completing reports such as daily logs, load tickets, incident reports, periodic reports, photographs, sketches, GPS
- Coordinating with community and debris removal contractor on daily operations;
- Supply completed paperwork

Failure to clearly document eligible work and costs may jeopardize reimbursement via Public Assistance grants. In Federally declared disasters, FEMA may validate the applicant's monitoring efforts to ensure that eligible debris is being removed and processed efficiently.

### **DEBRIS RESOURCES**

The below links are offered to assist communities with meeting procurement requirements established in 44 CFR Part 13, as well as other Public Assistance Program eligibility requirements when procuring debris removal and monitoring contracts.

- <http://www.fema.gov/pdf/government/grant/pa/demagde.pdf>  
FEMA Public Assistance – Debris Management Guide (FEMA 325)
- [http://www.fema.gov/pdf/government/grant/pa/fema\\_327\\_debris\\_monitoring.pdf](http://www.fema.gov/pdf/government/grant/pa/fema_327_debris_monitoring.pdf)  
FEMA Public Assistance – Debris Monitoring Guide (FEMA 327)

FEMA Debris Guidance and Fact Sheet publications can be found on the FEMA website at <http://www.fema.gov/9500-series-policy-publications>.

- Debris Monitoring, Fact Sheet 9580.203
- Debris Operations Hand Loaded Trucks and Trailer, Fact Sheet 9523.12
- Hazardous Stump Removal, Fact Sheet 9523.11
- Debris Removal from Private Property. Fact Sheet 9523.13
- Debris Contracting Guidance, Fact Sheet 9580.201
- Documenting and Validating Hazardous Trees, Limbs and Stumps, Fact Sheet 9580.204

State DEP disaster debris management guidance:

- <http://www.mass.gov/dep/floodcleanup.htm#dm>
- <http://www.mass.gov/dep/recycle/laws/ddcontsm.pdf>

### **ADDITIONAL NOTES**

- Please ensure all State and local procurement laws and regulations are met throughout the emergency and non-emergency procurement process.

- Document for your records and to meet FEMA reimbursement requirements all debris activity from cradle to grave including:
  - Location of work
  - Roadway jurisdiction (state, local)
  - Equipment utilization (type and hours used)
  - Labor (position, hours, rates)
  - Type of debris cleared or removed
  - Volume of debris cleared or removed
- Documentation must include procurement, contracting, and invoicing records. Timesheets (contractor and municipal force labor), pay warrants, and other source documentation sufficient to support all work submitted for reimbursement.
- Emergency Clearance work should be documented separately from Debris Removal because Emergency Clearance is reimbursed under Category B and Debris Removal is reimbursed under Category A.